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AND
REGULATIONS
FOR THE
INDULGENCES

That are Allowed to the

FAITHFUL
IN THE
MIDDLE DISTRICT.



Printed in the Year 1756.

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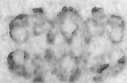
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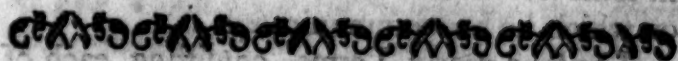
FATHERFUL

IN THE

MIDDLE DISTRICT.



Printed in the Year 1765.



*Instructions and Regulations for the Indulgences
that are allowed to the Faithful in the Middle
District.*

OUR Holy Father Pope *Benedict* the 14th,
in order that the Catholicks in this
Kingdom may plentifully enjoy the Benefit of
the Treasure of the Church, hath been pleased
to grant a *plenary Indulgence* four times a Year,
upon the Faithful complying with the follow-
ing Conditions. “ *First*, after having
“ received the Sacrament of Penance,
“ and the Blessed Eucharist, they must
“ some time the same Day, offer up their
“ Prayers for the Peace of the Church, in
“ some Chapel in which Mass is said,
“ *Secondly*, they must be ready and disposed
“ to assist the Poor by Alms-deeds according
“ to their Abilities; or to be present at publick
“ Catechism and Sermons as often as they
“ conveniently can; or to afford their chari-
“ table Succours to sick or dying Persons.”
Namely, by visiting such to comfort, or exhort
them; and pray, or read some pious Book by
them; and at least, if they are poor, to en-
deavour to serve or relieve them. This Dis-
position of Mind to any of these good Works
cannot be sincere, unless it shews itself by such
Works when the Occasion offers. It is ad-
viseable that the Person be particularly diligent
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in some or all these good Works, on the Day on which he has communicated.

The four yearly Terms, consisting each of fifteen Days, for gaining once in each Term, the abovesaid Indulgences, are appointed, by us, in the Middle District as follows.

First, From Christmas Eve at Noon, to the ninth Day of *January* inclusively till Noon.

Secondly, From Palm Sunday to Low Sunday inclusively.

Thirdly, From Whitsun Eve at Noon, to Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi inclusive.

Fourthly, From the Feast of all Saints, during fifteen Days.

Besides these four *Indulgences*, Power was formerly given by the Holy Apostolick See, to the Bishops, it's Apostolick Vicars in this Kingdom, to grant a *Plenary Indulgence*, three times a Year, to the Faithful committed to their Charge, in their respective Districts; which three former Indulgences the Holy See declared (October the 3d. 1756) still to subsist, as before the Grant of the last four. We therefore appoint the following Festivals, for obtaining the aforesaid three *Indulgences* in the Middle District.

First, The Assumption of our B. Lady, and during the Octave.

Secondly, The Feast of the Nativity of our B. Lady, and during the Octave.

Thirdly, From the *first* Sunday of Lent, to the *second* Sunday inclusive.

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The Conditions for obtaining the three above-mentioned Indulgences are as follows.

First, Sacramental Confession (to a Priest approved by the Bishop) on the Morning before Communion, or on the foregoing Day. *Secondly*, receiving devoutly the Holy Communion. *Thirdly*, To offer up some Prayers on the same Day after Communion for the whole State of the Catholick Church, for the bringing all straying Souls into the Fold of *Christ*; and for the general Peace of *Christendom*. And *Lastly*, for the Blessing of God upon this Nation.

We grant to all Priests to whom we have entrusted the care of Souls, the Power of changing any of the above-said Conditions into others equivalent, in favour of the Sick, Prisoners, or others of their Penitents, who shall not be able to comply with those here prescribed. We likewise give to those Priests, who by serving two or more Congregations, or through the multitude of their Penitents, cannot attend them all within the Terms appointed, the Power of deferring the said Indulgences with regard to some of their Congregations, or Penitents, to the following week or fortnight, or to the next Visit of those Congregations, provided it happen within the Month.

Now in order to give a clear Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholick Church concerning *Satisfaction* for Sin, and the Nature of an *Indulgence*, it is necessary to observe, that the Manner in which Sin is forgiven by the

Sacrament of Penance, differs from that of Baptism. This latter is the Sacrament of Regeneration, by which God is pleased to impart through his infinite Mercy and the Merits of Christ, an entire abolition of Sin without reserving any Punishment. But Sins committed after Baptism are most grievous by the aggravating Circumstances of Perfidy, Sacrilege, and Relapse implied in an enormous abuse of Grace, a Profanation of what was consecrated to God, and a Violation of the most solemn baptismal Vows and Engagements. Whence the second Remedy is more difficult and severe, it operates as it were by Aduktion and Incision. The Holy Fathers also observe, that if the second Remedy were too light, Men would be tempted more easily to return to Sin. God therefore is pleased to grant them this Pardon upon certain Conditions, that they may feel in some Degree the enormity of their Offences. Christ paid a super-abundant Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; and all Remission of Sin is granted to Man through the Redemption of Christ, and is the most pure and gratuitous Mercy, a free Application of his Satisfaction, and the Fruit of his sacred Passion. By him alone can we be made clean, and by his Blood alone is all Sin washed away. But it belongs to him who gives a Grace or Favour to prescribe the Conditions under which he grants it. When God pardoned Adam his Sin of Disobedience, he neither discharged him nor his Posterity of all the Consequences of that Sin. And in the
 Sacra-

Sacrament of Penance he communicates the Fruit of Christ's Death for the Remission of Sin in such a Manner, as to require certain Conditions, and some voluntary Chastisement of Sin, or a temporal Satisfaction. This the Penitent makes by the continued anguish of a Heart quite broken with Sorrow and Compunction, by the Humiliation of Confession, by Alms-deeds, Fasting, and other good Works done in a sincere Spirit of Penance. Hence the Sacrament of Penance is called by the Holy Fathers a laborious Baptism, and a Baptism of Tears. The deeper the Sinners Wound is, the longer and the more diligent must the Remedy be, that the Satisfaction may bear some degree of Proportion to the Crime. Hence St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, St. Isidore, and other Fathers of the Church often complain that he is an unskilful Physician who presses the swelling Impostumes with too gentle an Hand. This is the unchangeable Doctrine of the Catholick Faith, these are the holy Rules and Maxims which the sacred Oracles of the Scripture point out, and which are delivered by the constant and unanimous Tradition of the Holy Fathers, the Channels through which our Faith and its genuine Practice have been conveyed down to us.

A firm Purpose of endeavouring to fulfil this Condition, and to make this Satisfaction, by a proportioned voluntary Chastisement, is no less an essential Ingredient in an Act of Contrition or Repentance, than a sorrow for Sins committed, and a firm purpose of avoiding

all Sin, and the voluntary immediate Occasions for the Time to come. In this sense the satisfying the divine Justice for Sin by painful and laborious Works of Penance, is called by the Catholick Church *Satisfaction*.

The ancient penitential Canons which were rigorously observed during above 1200 Years, (as mentioned by Tertullian, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and other Ecclesiastical Writers through every Century down to the 13th) prescribe to Penitents who have been guilty of grievous Sins, a severe Course of Fasting, Humiliation, and assiduous Prayer, for 7, 10, 20, 40, or 100 Days, or for many Years, or the whole Life of the Penitent. Sin remains still the same, the Force, Laws, and Conditions of Penance are always the same, and the same Satisfaction is due from Penitents to the divine Justice. Christ who gave to the Pastors the Power of absolving penitent Sinners, or of retaining the Sins of such as neglect to bring the true Dispositions of Repentance; has left in his Church an Authority of relaxing this temporal Satisfaction or Debt due for Sins already remitted by the Sacrament of Penance. And this Authority the Popes and Bishops have always exercised as Circumstances seemed to require, supplying from the infinite Treasures of the Merits of Christ's Death, and through the joint Prayers of the Faithful, and the sufferings of the Martyrs, what is wanting in the Satisfaction of fervent Penitents. General *plenary Indulgences*, or Relaxations of this temporal Debt were usually granted in the beginning-

ginnings of cruel Persecutions of the Church, as appears from St. Cyprian, Ep. 54. ad Corn. it is also clear from the same Father in his *Treatise de Lapsis*, that it was usual for Bishops to grant Indulgences to particular Penitents at the Intercession of Martyrs and Confessors, tho' that zealous Prelate was often obliged to refuse them, when there was no sufficient Cause for such Grants, and when they would have only tended to enervate the Discipline of Penance, and would not have satisfied the divine Justice, or given a Peace which would have been ratified in Heaven. The Bishops also gave *Indulgences* in Cases of extraordinary Fervour in Penitents, as is mentioned in the ancient Council of *Ancyra*, (can. 2, 5, 22, 25,) in the first General Council of Nice (can. 12,) in the fourth Council of Carthage (can. 75,) also by St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, &c. It was at the joint Prayers of the Faithful of Corinth that St. Paul granted a *plenary Indulgence* to the incestuous Man, upon his Repentance, of whom he says, that he forgave him in the Person of Christ, for their Sakes, and that he might not be overwhelmed with excess of Sorrow. 2 Cor. Cp. 2, v. 7, 10. It is upon the like Occasions that the chief Pastors of the Church, at this Day grant *Indulgences*, applying the Merits of the whole to those whose Crimes stand in need of a greater Satisfaction, and this by Virtue of the Communion of the Saints. The Prayers or Merits of all the Members of Christ are nothing but from the Merits of their sacred

Head, which are applied by all the Means, by which we can draw down his Mercy and Grace upon ourselves or others. And when God is made Propitious to some through the Prayers of others, he honours by this means his Son Jesus Christ in the communion of his Members through him. For this Reason the ancient Penitents were taught to sollicite the Prayers of the rest of the Faithful, to which also the Bishops recommended them.-----

Whence St. Austin in a Sermon to his People, recommended to their Prayers an humble Penitent, in these words, " Pray for him through
 " the Merits of Jesus Christ; make him par-
 " take of the Supplications which you will
 " offer to the divine Majesty: for we know
 " and are assured that your Prayers will Efface
 " his Sins (in Ps. 61.)"

An Indulgence is a *Relaxation of the temporal Punishment or Satisfaction due for Sins already committed*; but by no means a Pardon for Sins to come or a leave to commit Sin, as some have misrepresented our Doctrine, to the scandal of the Church: the very thought of which blasphemy cannot be entertained without horror. *Indulgences* being only a Means by which the Fruit of Christ's sacred Passion is applied to our Souls; therefore they can be no more injurious to, or derogatory from, his Merits, than Prayer, the Sacraments, or other Means instituted by Christ to impart their Influence to us. Every Penitent must observe that an *Indulgence* is not a Gratification to Sloth and Tepidity, but a Succour granted to his Weak-
 ness

ness and Inability in doing Penance, or making due Satisfaction. It would be an erroneous Opinion, as Divines agree, and as his present Holiness declares, in his Letter on the Preparation to the Jubilee in the Year 1750, should any one pretend to say, that the Practice of Penance, (which is the Precept of Christ, St. Luke 13, 5. and on many accounts the perpetual Obligation of all Christians, especially grievous Sinners) is any way impaired or taken away by the use of *Indulgences*.

The most necessary and first Condition for gaining the Fruit of an *Indulgence* is a sincere Repentance and Contrition, which it essentially presupposes, and upon which it is founded; for unless Sin be destroyed in the Soul, it is the most foolish Illusion to hope a for Grace which is the Perfection of Justification. Now to obtain this Mercy, the Penitent is to remember, that more will be forgiven to him who loves most: he is therefore earnestly to ask of God, and carefully to stir himself up to, the most perfect Compunction of Heart: he must confess his Crimes with Shame and Confusion: he must arm himself with holy Zeal against himself, and entering into the views of the Divine justice, must resolve to chastise sin in himself, that he may prevent the Divine Judgments, and move God to Pity and Compassion. And that the Merits of Christ may be applied to his Soul, to the perfect Discharge of his Debts, he must beg to share in the Prayers of the Faithful, the Treasures of all the Saints, and the sufferings of the Martyrs, whose

whose Intercession even on Earth was able to obtain *Indulgences*. To the most sincere Compunction, he must join the greatest Fidelity and Fervour, in fulfilling all the Conditions required. O with what Fervour ought we to embrace these favourable Days of Mercy, if we seriously consider and weigh how precious the Grace is to which we aspire, to recover the unspotted Robe which we received in Baptism, and to remove every Obstacle that can retard the union of our Souls with God when we shall be called hence.

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